THE STATE OF THE FUTURE LIFE, And the Present's Order to It:

Consider'd

By *THO. WHITE* Gent.

PSAL. 15. 11.

Notas mihi feciſti vias vitæ: adimplebis me lætitia cum vultu Tuo: delectationes in Dextra Tua, uſq; in finem.

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To the Reader.

LEst this petty Countryman of ours may seem to impose on the World, or that *eminent Name* which adorns the Front: 'Tis judg'd a duty, to make its first breath proclaim This but a *Translation* out of that *Latin* Original, which a Powerful solliciter prevayl'd upon the well furnisht Charity of

this Author, ſuddenly, to digeſt into a perfect Courſe of Meditations, for the *Spiritual exerciſe* of the Engliſh *Clergy*.

And now, this free confeſſion obliges it, wiſely, to prevent a ſeverer cenſure, by detecting as ingenuouſly its farther imperfections, preſenting but the juſt half of that body; nor this, rigorouſly or *verbatim*, but with a fair proportion of liberty; wherein, as the different *genius* of ſo diſtinct languages vindicates its providence, thus, to ſecure the ſame clearneſs

and

and *emphasis* to the same very sense; so, in the other, the entire fitness of this part, by it self, for the *General* use, may excuse its separation from the rest, which is but *singular*, and concerns onely the Clergy: who may civilly be referr'd to the Fountain, if they have any appetite; whence a prudent compassion has drawn this, onely for such weak or nice Stomachs, soon clog'd with the sight of variety, or more than is just necessary for their own present refection.

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THE STATE OF THE Future Life, AND The Present's Order to it.

THE FIRST Consideration.

True Felicity, or, the perfect Happiness of a Rational Soul, is the Future Life's Portion.

The First Point.

CONsider, since Almighty God has ordain'd, for man, two sorts of life; one, in this world, short and full of misery; the other

1. *The future life preferable.*

in the next, everlasting, and, for those that live well here, subject to no evil, and abounding with all good: 'Tis evident, this latter is infinitely and without all comparison, to be prefer'd.

The second point.

2. *Because knowledge there, more perfect.*

AGain, considering that knowledge is the good of a rational soul; and that no one object has the least repugnance to any other, as to being known, but all (however opposite among themselves) are perfectly consistent in the understanding; the soul, of its own nature, if not checkt, by union with the body, is capable of knowing all things. Since therefore, through the obstruction of the body in the whole course of this life, she attains to the knowledge of but very few things, and those one by one; whereas in the next world, she shall be freed from all impediment, being either alone without the body, or absolute

lute Mistris of it: 'tis evidently consequent that, knowledge (the souls good, in respect of the object) must hereafter, where 'tis not hindred, infinitely surpass it self, here, whil'st 'tis subject to the body.

The third point.

BUt farther, considering that all objects and things, both in their nature and number, are limited and finite; except Almighty God, who alone, in his sole essence, (as in one single reality and formality) contains them all and infinite other possibilities, in a more united and infinitely higher kind; whence, he's the sole object that can render our knowledge perfect, and that onely soul's good whose vision and fruition can make us happy: Hence, again, it follows that, since this object is reserv'd for the next life, its felicity is incomparably to be preferr'd before all the goods and happiness this life can promise, much less afford, us. 3. *God being it's sole object.*

Con-

Conclusion.

Therefore, onely to be minded.

COnclude, therefore, and convince thy self that this one, onely necessary, and soul-satisfying good ought to be prosecuted and sought for, even with the neglect of all other interests; that the greatest part of thy life, perhaps, hitherto, has perish'd and been spent in vain: and resolve seriously to provide for the future, that, of that little time which peradventure is left thee, no day, no hour, no moment pass by, without some progress towards thy obtaining this sole good.

The

The second Consideration.

The delight which proceeds from the knowledge and vision of Almighty God, infinitely excels all other.

The first Point.

1. *All delight from the intellect.*

Consider, since all delight either consists in knowledge, or at least, absolutely depends on it; for, we find by experience, all the knowledge we have, (ev'n sensible,) is perfected in the brain, by help of the understanding: it follows that, all delight, whether intellectual or sensual, proceeds from the soul, as it is intellectual; and consequently, that delectation, which comprehends all intellectual, comprehends, indeed, all manner of delight: wherefore, the vision of God must needs contain, in it self, all kind of sweet contentments, and infinitely exceed all other delights. The

The second Point.

2. *whence God transcends all corporal pleasures.*

AGgain, all temporal and worldly pleasures consist in a certain motion and transient succession, which quickly slip away; and can have no greater stability than the time, by which they are measured: nor indeed can that be long; for neither are we able alwaies to eat or drink, *&c.* nor yet alwaies attend or reflect (without which 'tis impossible to take delight) what we do, whilst we are in these actions. But on the contrary, that delight which flowes from the vision of God is everlasting, steddy and unchangeable as any fixt and permanent substance, not enjoyed by piecemeal, never interrupted, as of necessity, all corporal pleasures are in this life; but full and altogether, and needing no attention, it self essentially reflecting upon it self: so that it alone exceeds all worldly pleasures, as far as all time exceeds one instant, the vast Machin of the

the world, the least Moat we discover in the sun beams, or the highest Angel a contemptible worm, and infinitely more, beyond all comparison.

The third Point.

LAstly, all other objects of delight may be comprehended by our understanding, may be contemned by our will, as less than our soul and not able to satisfie it: onely Almighty God so fills and oversatisfies, that, entirely possessing our affections, he, as it were forces the soul to love and delight, more than of its own nature it possibly could; nor can it ever be weary of the good it enjoyes, but still, with its whole and more eager desire, will hug and cling to its beloved object; so that a soul which sees God seeks nothing else, but rests fully satisfied, and as it were, lull'd into a dear contentment, wherein it remains so absorpt and wholy ravisht, that it

3 *He onely filling the soul.*

ſweetly languiſhes and diſſolves into ſpirits and flames of love, the better to ineſſence and incorporate it ſelf into God. Thus, then, thou ſeeſt clearly demonſtrated this great-concerning truth, that no delight can be comparable to thy beatitude; and that, 'tis no wonder to hear our Bleſſed Lord and Maſter, in a manner, labour to expreſs it, when he ſaid, *Menſuram plenam, & confertam, & coagitatam, & ſupereffluentem dabunt in ſinus veſtros*, you ſhall be paid with good meaſure, heap'd up, and preſs'd down, and thruſt together, and yet running over into your boſoms.

Concluſion.

Therefore, fully reſolve for him.

CConclude, therefore, with a full reſolution, by all thy works and beſt endeavours, and even, if need be, with the hazard and loſs of all other goods, to purchaſe this *hidden Treaſure*, this *precious Pearl*, which at length, though late, thou haſt hit on; and

to

to think nothing considerable nor to be car'd for, in comparison of this; to pitty the unhappiness of those poor souls that spend their whole affections in toys and trifles of this life, neglecting this onely necessary good; and to rejoyce in the secret of thy bosome, that being vouchsaf'd grace, now, to see that *the wisdom of this world is*, in very truth, *but folly*, it has pleased thy kind Lord to number thee amonst those few that are truly wise.

The third Consideration.

The happy State of the Just's Bodies, after their Resurrection.

The first Point.

CONsider, when the last day shall restore thee thy body again, it shall be endow'd with such a degree of health, as will be most

1. *Gloriously qualify'd.*

most convenient for all thy operations, both spiritual and corporal, accompany'd with an incapacity of deficience or corruption, and with such an agility as the most perfect disposition of the Nerves can cause; with access of all possible swiftness, and a power of raising or depressing thy self at pleasure, as also of consisting with or penetrating any other body: to all which, thou shalt have such a graceful comelineſs, with so rare a beauty of light and colour, (whose like shall not be found in any other body but thine) that thereby, thou shalt become an ornament to the Universe; adding so peculiar a grace to all the rest, that without thee, that whole mass of glorious bodies would seem in a manner lame and defective.

The second point.

2. *universally honour'd.*

MOreover, all the laudable actions of thy whole life shall be known to all the men and Angels,

gels, that are or ever were; who, admiring all and every perfection in them, (even to the least circumstances and thoughts that accompany'd them) shall, from their very hearts and by the force of truth, love and praise thee for them, nay, the very Devils and damned souls shall honour thee, but with envy, grief, and repentance; and what may seem more strange, thy very sins shall be then a glory to thee, both because thou orecam'st and forsook'st them, and that, even in their commission, there was possibly some laudable circumstance, & which avail'd to thy salvation. So that then, thou shalt have so many friends, so many admirers of thy vertue, as there are Saints and Angels; so many witnesses of thine Excellency, as there are damned souls and Devils, who, obstinate in their own malice, by their torments shall confess and increase thy Glory.

The

The third point.

3. *Entirely comply'd with.*

Adde to this, neither the Devils nor damned souls shall be able, in any thy least motion or will, to resist thee, all the Saints and Angels shall observe and comply with thy desires, more punctually then any obsequious servant ever watch'd his Masters eye; and no corporeal nature shall be able to contest with thee, but all bodies shall obey thee in what ever thou hast a mind to: so that there thou shalt neither want power, where none shall contradict thee, nor riches, where nothing shall be denyed thee.

Conclusion.

Therefore, here to be sacrific'd up in hope.

Conclude then, whatever good thou shalt here forsake, for God and vertue's Love, will not be lost, but there restor'd with interest, whether friends, wealth, honour, or dominion. Wherefore, doubt not, like a prudent Merchant, to venture thy goods to the

the sea of fortune, and storms of persecution; whence thou shalt find an indefectible treasure layd up in Heaven for thee; or like the good husbandman, to sow, in the winter of adversities (though with some reluctance and sorrow) thy seed in vertu's ground, expecting the precious fruit it shall infallibly yield thee, in the summer of Eternity: having so firm an assurance as the express word of God, *they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*

The fourth Consideration.

The intolerable pains of the damned, for the loss of this happy knowledge and sight of God.

The first point.

1. *Equal to the inclination of a souls nature.*

Consider, man's soul being created for the vision of Almighty God, (as properly, and more, than a knife is made to cut, any vessel to be filled, and all heavy

heavy things for their center;) and a knowing substance, when it wants the good for which it was made, being very unquiet and full of pain, and that so much the more as its nature is more excellent, its force greater, and inclination more violent: it must needs follow that such a soul, (when it shall know what an infinite good the Almighty is, who alone is able to satisfie its appetite,) will be fill'd with a sorrow for so great a a loss, equal to the excellency of its nature and the force of its inclination. Reflect then with what violence a huge stone falls to it's center, or a Mighty bow of Steel, let loose, unbends it self, or powder, set on fire, breaks all to make it's way; and be assured the sorrow of an unhappy soul (who now, sees of what good it remains depriv'd) will be as far more violent than all these, as its nature and forces surpass the activity of the strongest bodies.

The second Point.

AGain, when this poor ſoul ſhall be convinc'd, how ſlender, baſe, ſordid, fading and almoſt momentany all thoſe things were, for which it contemn'd and loſt this infinite and only Good; that might ſo eaſily have been obtain'd, even with far leſs pains than were often employ'd on thoſe tranſitory toyes; and with far more ſecurity, (ſince, none could hinder it but it ſelf; no, not it ſelf deprive it ſelf of this, when once poſſeſt: but for thoſe, there was not the leaſt certainty by never ſo great endeavours, to compaſs them, nor the leaſt hope long to hold them:) when the unhappy Soul ſhall be clearly convinc'd of all this, will it not incomparably increaſe its grief and infinitely augment its torments, its pains?

2. *Aggravated, by the folly of her choice.*

The

The third Point.

BUt, above all, Those wretched Souls, who, whilst they liv'd in their Bodies, had receiv'd greater Knowledge of this Beatitude, and (by the honour of being *Christians*) had heard and believ'd both that there was an eternal Happiness provided for them, (if themselves would) and that it incomparably exceeded all temporal Goods and worldly Felicity; yet see, on the other side, how they spent their whole lives in running after Vanities and trash, as if they had been *Pagans* and ignorant of Heaven: such must needs, out of this knowledge, fall into an incredible, yet unprofitable, repentance; and according to our Saviours sentence, *be beaten with many stripes*, as the wise man explicates, *like great Persons be greatly tormented.*

Conclusion.

Therefore in time prevent it.

COnclude, with fear and trembling; lest what happens to many

many, and perhaps, to most Christians, may also be thy lot: and resolve, with a courage, to shake off quickly the burthen of all worldly fears or affections that hinder thy march to heaven; lest when death shall surprize thee, thou mayst not, peradventure, find time for repentance, nor be able to alter, in a moment, what thy whole life has been us'd to.

The fifth Consideration.

The unspeakable pains which the damned shall suffer, through their own disordinate affections.

The first Point.

I. *Missing their unalterable desires.*

Consider, since a soul cannot be without desires, but something it must love; wherefore, if it loves not true beatitude, it must needs desire false goods: whence it will clearly follow that, the

souls of the wicked, who dye without loving God, must after death, desire those same goods on which they placed their affections, whilst they liv'd in this world; and the acts of a separated soul being incomparably, more strong and violent then any it could possibly exercise in the body, those souls must be all on fire, and incredibly burn with perpetual longings after the goods of this life; which notwithstanding, cannot be had in that state, and yet the desire of such is now grown natural to them, and consequently as unchangeable and immortal as their nature. They must therefore be eternally tormented with a furious, yet fruitless desire of those things they can never obtain; whence follows a continual desperation, insufferable grief, and aversion from the causes of so great evil, *viz.* hatred against God and themselves, and a raging madness altogether inexpliable.

The second Point.

BUt further, it being almost impossible, that he who directs not his life to God, should so settle his affections on any one temporal thing, as not to be distracted with successive desires of, *now, this*, *now that*, independent of one another; and all those acts, which in this life, are successive and at several times, being in the next world, altogether and at once in the soul: it must needs follow that such a soul, in the next life, desires at the same time, contrary and incompossible things; and so, for ever, remains divided in and against it self, alwaies at debate and strife with it self, and as if compounded of so many furious beasts, as it has contrary passions, perpetually biting and tearing one another, without the least minute of rest; becomming thus to it self a most bitter, spiteful and tedious enemy, and which way soe-

2. *Impossible in themselves.*

ever it turns, still meeting new goads and spears that gore it to the very heart.

The third point.

3. *Which they see eternal.*

AND which is yet more grievous than all the rest, when these unhappy souls shall clearly see that these evils, into which they have plung'd themselves, shall never have an end, can never be lessen'd with any success of time, nor admit of any the least comfort, no not so much as a little oblivion or not thinking on them, for a moment; but shall alwaies and all at once in a heap orewhelm and oppress them, continually gnawing and eating, yet without consuming their very bowels: what mountain of calāities what *Ætna's* of despair must this needs draw upon them? do but reflect on your self what a terror 'tis wont to strike when you have some time thought of this Eternity, by multiplying hundreds, thousands, and millions of years; which

which notwithstanding, when you have gone as far as you are able, is infinitely short of what Eternity is: and then tell me what effect you think this sad consideration must needs produce in the damned who by the excellency of their nature and the State wherein they now are, cannot but behold the horrid countenance of this their accursed Eternity, truly and such as in it self, it is for ever.

Conclusion.

Therefore regulate the affections.

COnclude then. Since our eternal misery flows from the habits and affections our souls acquire in this life, which if misplac'd upon objects unenjoyable in the next, engage us above all possibility of relief, into everlasting sorrows and distractions. Resolve from this hour, from this very moment, to bid adieu to the vanities of this world: and as you cannot but know that nothing ought to be belov'd but for our last

end, which is God: so courageously strive to regulate your affections, and force them to be subject to this onely rule of true reason.

The sixth Consideration.

Though the Bodies of the damned, by reason of their State, be incorruptible after the resurrection; yet shall not their souls be exempt from corporal pains.

The first point.

1. *Extreme sorrow including all.*

CONsider, as all pleasure in man, proceeds from the soul, so of necessity must all grief too; wherefore as in the highest delight all kind of pleasure is contained, so in the extremest sorrow, all kind of grief is included: since therefore all the corporal pains we suffer are but several griefs in the soul; it evidently follows that, in damned souls where extream sorrow reigns, no kind of pain can be wanting. Whence though their bodies be in a state of immutability, &

no

no material instruments of torment can work on them after the resurrection; yet shall not they be free even from corporal pains; but feel incomparably more grievously than then they ever could in this life, the torments of burning by fire, the gnawing of worms and serpents, the affliction of weeping and wayling, the causes of gnashing the teeth, and all pains whatever have been shew'd to holy persons in their approved visions.

The second point.

AGain, when all their wickednesses and most infamous actions, when every word and thought shall not onely be written in their own consciences, but laid open to the sight of all the world; those wretched creatures of necessity must then appear, both to themselves and all others, most effeminate, foolish and wicked, and by consequence most base and infamous; and thereby most hateful even to themselves, contemptible to God and his Angels,

With confusion before all sides.

all the blessed souls, nay even to the very Devils and all the damned crew; but especially to those once honour'd & belov'd companions of their wickedness, in this world, whom either while they lived they had courted into their sins, or been by them allur'd and drawn into theirs; and so in an instant and to all eternity, become depriv'd of all, even false friendship, vain honour, and what ever seeming goods they so passionately affected and ambitiously sought for in this life.

The third point.

3. *All heightned through the subjection of the body.*

LAstly, though their bodies, then remain perfectly subject to their souls, yet even this subjection through the indisposition of their souls, can onely serve to render them more miserable and hateful; their eyes and countenances fram'd according to the horror of their guilty consciences

and

and tormented thoughts; how can they but be most ugly and abominable? the rest of their members, in what strange postures expressing the distraction of their minds, beyond all bedlams for their mad and extravagant deformities? and if any occasion of action should be offer'd them, without any prudence or consideration, at the very first motion, how prone to all wickedness, and unable to resist any evil? onely secure by their state of immutability: unhappy *immutability!* which onely serves them never to to be chang'd from but eternally to endure torments that would quickly dissolve any thing less than an immortal body.

Conclusion.

Therefore, love not thy self here.

CONclude then, *who ever loves his soul*, in this life (that is, inordinately and according to flesh and blood) truly *loses it* in the next world (as our Lord foretold) and falls into the evils which

here he labours so much to shun: but with a very disadvantageous advantage; for by fearing little ills, he falls into infinite great ones, and by declining momentany sufferings, he runs into eternal. Take up, therefore, (as the Apostle exhorts thee) this *Buckler of faith*, and by the serious consideration of the next life's future evils, defend thy self *against the fiery darts of thine enemies*: fight courageously; and be certain the best way to avoid the evils thou art afraid of is constantly to endure them, when God and reason commands thee.

The

The seventh Consideration.

The beatifical Vision is the end, whereat we ought principally to aim in all our actions.

The first Point.

Consider first, since the Vision of Almighty God is the end for which we are created; and that tis so excellent a good that neither any one nor all other things put together, are any waies comparable even to the least degree of it: tis evident that *then* our whole life is *best*, when tis best fitted and order'd for obtaining this end; and if in any part it be ill or less well dispos'd for it, so far tis vicious, or at least imperfect. Wherefore tis the sole business of all prudent persons, so to order their whole life, (to the utmost of their power,) as may most directly and certainly lead them to attaining

1. *Good or bad, as proportion'd to the end.*

taining this happiness; proportionating every part thereof to the scope of the whole, and having still the end so considerately before their eyes, that all their actions may be squar'd and levell'd to it.

The second Point.

2. *That best, which begets a love to it.*

SEcondly, since the chief and proper action of a man, towards his end, is the *Love* of it, and the highest Good is above all to be loved: tis evident, those actions and endeavours to this end, are best which beget and breed in our selves a strong and solid *love* to it. Now there are two waies or *Mediums* to engender & encrease *love*: one by purging our hearts frō all other loves and affections, that so we may more freely and entirely attend to this we are in pursuit of; the other, by considering and meditating on, as well the great goods contain'd in the end or thing we desire to Love, as the extreme evils that follow or accompany their loss or privation.

Wherefore

Wherefore tis clear, our chief labour and ſtudy ought to be, ſo to order our life, that we may both often and ſeriouſly think on this our end and the infinite happineſs it contains; and that in all we undertake our affections be not corrupted and adulterated with the leaſt *Love* of the things themſelves, but our works be done purely for the *Love* of this bleſſed end, and all our intentions aim at the increaſe of this *Love*.

The third Point.

THirdly, ſince by every deliberate action, we aim at ſome end, or pretend the attaining ſome good; which we ſeek either purely for it ſelf, without any farther reference, or elſe intend this as a means to ſome other: tis evident that in every ſuch action, we love ſomething as the laſt end for which we do it. If then it be not done for the love of true beatitude (which is the enjoyment of God;) it muſt needs follow we do it onely for

3. *Every deliberate action important.*

for the love of some false Good, as Pleasure, Riches, or the like; and that in every such action, we love some false good, as our last end. Wherefore, it imports us to walk very cautiously with our God, and purify (all we can) our intentions; seeing no considerate action can be purely indifferent, but either advanced towards or swerves from *our true and onely Felicity, His beatifying sight.*

Conclusion.

Therefore, be careful and diligent.

COnclude, with thanksgiving to the Almighty, for this special favour of bringing thee thus seriously to reflect on thy ways: And if thou findest that hitherto, thou hast been too negligent, in a business of such consequence, strive henceforward to renew in thy self the fervour of Charity, with so much more care and diligence as thou hast already lost time. *Do what good thou canst in the day of this life:* for, our great

Master

Master tells us, when the night of death shall come, it will be too late to help our selves, but such as we are then found, must be our lot for all eternity.

The eighth Consideration.

Piety is conformable to Mans Nature: whence such as live according to Vertue, are most happy, even in this world.

The first point.

1. *The means of Nature's end truly pleasant.*

Consider, Since every ones particular End is that of Humane Nature; and, it cannot stand with the wisdom and goodness of our Creator, to have made our Nature other then such as was fit and conformable to obtain the End for which it was created; it must needs follow that the actions, by which we are to procure this End, are also conformable

mable to our Nature: And since What is agreeable to nature is pleasant and delightful, it must follow again, that those actions are very grateful and sweet, and therefore a Pious life, which consists of such actions, is not a crabbed and unpleasant, but on the contrary, a life full of sweetness and most apt to yield content: And, if some passages in it seem a little harsh, that they are but Medicinal, and whereby we are preserv'd from falling into others far more hurtful and worse to be digested; wherefore, that these also are sweet in their effect, not onely in respect of the future life, but even of the present, and like a bitter potion to be swallowed, with a joyful hope of the health they induce.

2. *Whence vertue brings peace, and vice disquiet.*

The second Point.

AGain, since a pious life orders the whole course of our actions to one end, so rendring them all conformable to one another;

it

it clearly exempts our lives from all inward opposition and contradiction, and keeps us in perfect peace with our selves: whereas on the contrary, a vicious life (which precipitates us, according to our passions, to follow now *this* now *that* Concupiscence) must needs fill our souls with repugnant affections, make us lead a life full of contradiction, and cast us into those very evils we seek most to fly. And as all vices are contrary to our nature, and cannot be kept subject to *reasons rule*; so are they of necessity, bitter and painful in their effects, pressing their followers still downward, from evil to worse, till in death they tumble them at length into Hell: where they shall justly complain that, *they have walked thither by difficult and rough waies, and even been wearied in their iniquities.*

The

The third Point.

3. *Piety not debarring even temporal contentments.*

THirdly, since our bodies are made for our souls, and the dispositions of the one for the operations of the other; it follows that *then* our souls best operate, when our bodies are best disposed, and that disposition of the body is *truly best*, which is best fitted to the operations of the soul; whence tis an errour to think it well with our bodies, when they are not fit to serve our soul. And hence again, it follows that even those delights and comforts of the body which God has created for its necessary *recreation*, are not to be denyed to a *Pious Life* in their due proportion; that a pious and orderly life, truly and really, more abounds with corporal delights than the life of the wicked, (as appears to any that considers the inconveniences unavoydably flowing from disorder:) and that, even they who abstain from those corporal delights

lights which are enjoyd in *Marriage*, and the poſſeſſion of *Riches*; ſuch find here, other far greater temporal pleaſures incompatible with theſe, as honour, friendſhip, knowledge, excellent converſation, and the like, which abundantly ſupply the defect of thoſe material enjoyments, and render their life more ſweet and happy, even in this world.

Concluſion.

Therefore, confidently proceed in it.

COnclude, then, without fear to commit thy ſelf to God and a pious life: & know that the Almighty has no need of thee, nor made thee for his own ſake, but for thine that thou mighſt partake that happineſs whereof he was eſſentially full; and therefore he were not wiſe, but would miſs of his end had he not prepar'd all things convenient to render thee happy. Be thou then but confident and diſcreetly proceed, and thou ſhalt quickly

quickly find by experience, what a difference there is between a wicked or negligent, & a truly vertuous & devout life; how much more pleasant, how much more full of comfort and delight, this is than *that*: and how *sweetly yet strongly*, our wise Creator has fram'd all the parts of our felicity conformable to each other, and to the end, for which he has ordain'd us.

The ninth Consideration.

God highly esteems our Felicity; then how ought we to value it.

1. *Creating the world, may himself for man.*

Consider, since Almighty God is essentially happy, and in possession of all good; and therefore incapable of the least new addition, by his creatures: tis evident that whatever he has created, he made not for his own, but for thine and thy brethrens sake; not to render himself, but thee and them happy

happy; and by consequence has valued your felicity above all the rest of his works. Behold therefore heaven, earth and sea, and all the creatures wherewith he has stor'd and adorn'd them, created for thee, and to bring thee to happiness, not cared for but as a means to that end: and (which is yet infinitely more ev'n beyond all amazement) see the Divinity it self humbled and impoverish't to raise and enrich thee; Him, whom but now, we concluded through his own fulness incapable of increase, devested for thy sake, of all his royal privileges, and cloth'd with all our miseries and infirmities: For what know we, amongst the whole mass of creatures, so distressed and helpless as a poor infant newly born? what so subject to all kind of contingencies and inconveniences? what requiring so much care and industry, to nurse and breed up to its perfection? Think on every particular, and see how high a rate the unerrable judgement of the Almighty has valued thy happiness.

The

The second Point.

2. *Passing through so painful a Life and Death.*

But again, Consider the whole Life and Death of *this poor God* pillag'd of his own, to purchase thy glory. See a Life of three and thirty long years endured, in continual necessities, labours, molestations, and contradictions. How often was it necessary that this most meek and innocent Lamb, who *never brake a bruised Reed, nor quenched the smoking Flax*, should, (to give thee an example of Patience) undergo the anger and indignation of his enemies? How often, to teach thee Meekness and Humility, was he to be chidden, threatned, reproched and blasphemed, without once opening his mouth to reply? What shall I say of his Travels, Sweats, Weariness, Lying without doores, Watching whole nights in Prayer, Fasting, Poverty, not having a House wherein to shrowd his Head, living on Alms, continual Dangers and Flyings from

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one place to another; especially in the last three years of his life? O, but his end! Consider his Anguish in the Garden, the manner of his Apprehension, his leading, or rather dragging from one Tribunal to another; all sorts of contempt, all manner of insolent and abusive revilements: weigh the Pains he suffered in the most tender and sensible parts of his Body; His being betray'd by One, and forsaken by the rest of his Disciples; the doleful presence of his dearest Mother, and other afflicted friends: In fine, his ignominious Death, and the effusion of the last drop of his Blood, for thy Redemption and eternall happiness.

The third Point.

LAstly, Consider, how, not content with all this, He spared not his Glorious Body, but ordain'd even that too to serve as a means for thy Felicity: leaving himself to thee in the Blessed Sacra-

3. *Feeding us with himself.*

crament, under the forms of Bread and Wine; not only to be seen and adored, but even to be handled, broken, chew'd, swallow'd and incorporated by thee: for all this, is as truly, and really verify'd of him, inveſted with the Accidents or forms of Bread and Wine, as it would be of the Bread it ſelf, were it taken before Conſecration; and its connatural Accidents are, now as truly, Thoſe of his Body, as they were of the Bread, whilſt it continued ſuch. Add, now, to this, all the Injuries and indignities that are offered his Sacred Perſon (as it lyes veyl'd under thoſe Accidents, for thy Love) whether by Negligence of inconſiderate Servants, or Malice of wicked Sinners; and ſee to what a pitch his Charity to thee is heightned, which has made him in a manner prefer thee before himſelf.

Con-

Conclusion.

COnclude therefore, since thou neither mayst nor canst doubt, but that the judgement of thy God is most certain, impartial and unerrable; what care and esteem oughtest thou to have of thine own Salvation? what Sollicitude, to seek the means of attaining it? what diligence to omit nothing in order to assure it? whereof thou seest him so industriously careful, who is no wayes concerned (more than out of pure Goodness) whether thou beest a sav'd Soul or no; and yet whom even Goodness it self could not so transport, as to make him think any price too high to procure thee Felicity. *Therefore, value thy Salvation*

The tenth Consideration.

The great Benefits Mankind has received by Christ's coming into the World.

The first Point.

1. *Rendred, easily capable of high Mysteries.*

CONsider, first, By this most wise Oeconomy and gracious dispensation of Christ, (great *Steward* of Gods house, the Church,) Mankind is made capable of admirable Secrets and high Mysteries; and has attain'd a most certain knowledge of them: for, who so simple, that cannot believe what is told him, when nothing else is required? and what can be so firm and certain, either to our Senses or understandings, as the word of God? for since by it, all other things were made, and from it, had their Natures; it doubtless, in it self, is far more securely constanc

ſtant and fixt, than the very ſubſtance of all created Beings, and thoſe cauſes, *à priore*, that give a certainty to our Demonſtrations. And hence 'tis that now, whole Nations of people, learned and ignorant, wiſe and ſimple, every ſilly old woman clearly conceives and moſt firmly believes the immortality of the Soul, the Condition of the good and wicked after death, the eternity of Pains or pleaſures that attend us, with other moſt important Verities; concerning which, we find very little amongſt the Philoſophers, as whereat, the greateſt wits of them but groped like blind Men.

The ſecond Point.

2. *Encouragʼd by His example.*

AGain, By Chriſt's example we are ſtrongly encourag'd to all Virtue. Can there be any ſo faint-hearted, as not to dare venture himſelf the ſame way he ſees his Captain paſs before him; who, he's ſure, both knows the beſt and ſecureſt Path to ſalvati-

on, and is so perfectly good, that even in his Voice he cannot deceive, much less counterfeit in his Actions? When we see him, then, choose for himself the same things he proposes to us, and tread out the way which he would have us walk; nay, when we see him, not onely, Live and Dye in this way, but Rise again and enter the Possession of those Glories he wooes us to hope for: can we any longer doubt whether we should follow his foot-steps, and beat the same Path? or shall we not confidently aspire to the Happiness he so faithfully has promis'd, and so dearly purchas'd?

The third Point.

3. *Endear'd by his sufferings.*

But, above all, By this Grace of Christ, our Charity to God is extremely heightned, and by degrees exceſſively strange and remarkable; for, First, whereas God was invisible and inaccessible, ev'n to our very thoughts, before; He's

He's, now, become a Man like us, expos'd to the apprehension even of our senses, that most easie and obvious way of our knowing. Next, by this gracious condescendence, He has espous'd all the Titles that may endear our Affections; having made himself our Master, our Friend, our Companion, our Brother, His Father to become ours, and himself a Member of the same Body with us. And knowing that, as it is the greatest possible testimony of Love, *to suffer for a Friend*, so 'tis the most effective means to beget a mutual Love; our Heavenly Father (desirous to settle a perfect correspondence, in That, betwixt his *only Begotten*, and us, his adopted Sons) sent Him into this world to suffer, for our sakes, all kind of evils, all manner of contempts, all sorts of injuries, miseries, torments, and a most shameful Death, *Sic Deus dilexit Mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret pro mundi vitâ.* To such a point did God love us, as to give up, even to death, for our

Life, his only, his equal, his coeſſential and ſubſtantial Son. Nor was this Son leſs forward and willing to accept, than his father to enjoyn him all this, for us; but as his Apoſtle ſays, *Dilexit me, & tradidit ſeipſum pro me*, He lov'd me, and ſo lov'd me, as to live in miſeries, and Dye with torments, for me. Nor did his love end with his life: Since though it was neceſſary to withdraw his Corporal preſence from our ſenſes, yet *Love* would not let him entirely be abſent; but wittily found out this ſtupendious Invention, to remain with us in the bleſſed Sacrament, not only to be ſeen and ador'd by our Faith, but really, to incorporate and mingle his Fleſh with ours, making himſelf the nouriſhment both of our Souls and Bodies. In fine, by this his Oeconomy and the pouring out of his Holy Spirit, and changing, in a manner the whole world (at leaſt, ſo far as concern'd mens Souls) through through the innumerable Miracles wrought by himſelf and his

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Followers, to the Conversion of Nations; he has rendred those things easie to us, by the custom of hearing and seeing them done by others, which before seemed almost impossible and not to be imitated; and so taken away the greatest hinderances of our love to him.

Conclusion.

Therefore inexcusably, be good.

COnclude, therefore. Now do there's no excuse left, but an absolute necessity imposed on thee to live holily; the means thereof being rendred both so easie and familiar to thee, and so laudable, too, amongst men that 'tis almost a shame and counted worthy of reproch to live otherwise. What canst thou then pretend, what alledge to exempt thy self? No; Almighty God has so ensnar'd and hedg'd thee in, on every side, with obligations to be Vertuous; that thou canst not now, without great inconveniences, even in this world, be vicious.

All things invite thee, All things allure thee, All things in a manner, compel thee to be good. O follow! and follow willingly.

The eleventh Consideration.

Meekness and Humility is the readiest way to Happiness, not onely hereafter, but even in this Life.

The first Point.

1. *No Christian revengeful.*

CONsider, Though our Saviour was vouchsaf'd us, both as a Master and Model of all vertues, and a perfect Pattern for all the Actions of our whole Life; yet two Vertues we find, especially, particularly and in a manner, only recommended to us, Meekness and mutual Charity; the first he enforces on us, in these sweet words, *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your Souls.* Behold, therefore

fore, if thou wilt be a Christian thou must very carefully practice this vertue, nor indeed canst thou challenge that name unless thou at least endeavour to become Meek and Humble; and so far only, thou mayst judge thy self to have profited in the School of Christ, as thou findst thy self advanced in the progress of this vertue. Now what is this humble Meekness so highly commended to us by our great Master, but a sweetness of Disposition, which makes us not seek revenge or *render evil for evil*, no not even in desire. That then thou art here commanded is, When thou sufferest an injury, not to render nor wish any harm to the Person that did it; unless by way of correction, to such as are under thy charge, and even then, to be sure the punishment be inflicted for Love of them, not thy self for their amendment, not thy satisfaction.

The second point.

2. *All anger unreasonable.*

Consider, 'tis irrational and not becoming a person of understanding to wish evil to another, because he has offended thee. For as if thou shouldst fall into a ditch, or a stone fall upon thee, it were unreasonable to be cholerick at the ditch or stone, and seek revenge like a dog; so no less folly is it to be angry with a person for doing thee a displeasure. Since either 'tis done justly or unjustly: if justly, thou oughtst to turn thine anger on thy self, for deserving it, and not on the doer; if unjustly, then certainly he was unjust before he did it; and if thou then wert not angry with him for being unjust, neither oughtst thou be, now for his doing unjustly it being but natural and what in reason thou shouldst expect, that an unjust person should do unjust things. Again, since no humane action or desire

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is reasonable, which aims not at some good to him that wills or does it; and revenge aims onely at the evil of the offender, which is, no waies thy good, but meerly as a satisfaction of thy vindicative appetite: in reason thou oughtst not to wish anothers ill, but rather repress thine own unreasonable Humour.

The third Point.

3. *Meekness alone sweetens life.*

COnsider the reward promis'd thee by our kind Master, for meekness; *You shall find rest*, says he, *to your souls*; and in another place, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land*; and again, *In your patience* (that is, meekness) *you shall possess* (that is, enjoy) *your souls*: Of all which the sense is, that besides the reward in heaven, the greatest sweetness this present life affords, *viz.* A quiet and contented mind, is properly and peculiarly reserv'd for the meek as a recompence of their ver-

vertues. Whereas those that seek revenge are alwaies in contention and at debate with one another; which for the most part costs their purses well in suits and law-wranglings, and many times their skins, even their lives too in desperate quarrels: Besides, within what tumults of passion are raisd in their souls? what cares, what fears continually disquiet and torment them? that they neither enjoy themselves, nor even the temporal blessings God has given them. Tis meekness alone, then you see affords contentment, and sweetens our whole life.

Therefore, strongly embrace it.

Conclusion.

COnclude, then. What a good God we serve! who is so sollicitous, as for our Future, so even for our present happiness, that he is pleas'd not onely most tenderly to recommend, and with sweet words allure us to it, but even, to introduce them by exhibiting himself

self to us, as a Master and Patterne of those means, by which true temporal comforts and contentments (as much as this present life admits) are to be obtaind. What evasion can there be from such kindness? what excuse from so important, so pleasant an interest? no, either renounce the name of Christian, or resolve to addict thy self seriously to the exercise of this vertue.

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The twelfth Consideration.

Fraternal charity is the true mark of a good Christian, and the onely sure way to eternal Happiness.

The first Point.

1. *Appropriated to the law of Grace.*

CONsider, first, Our Lord and dear Master, to fix on us a greater necessity, and as it were, a double tye of mutual love and charity to one another, was pleas'd not onely, to strengthen the old Commandement of *loving our neighbour as our self*, by commanding it anew as from himself, when he said, *I give you a new command*, and *this is my command that ye love one another*; but also in most particular manner, to recommend

commend and appropriate it to the law of grace, as a special mark and sign of Christianity, whereby true Christians are distinguisht from false. *By this men shall know that you are my Disciples, if you love one another.* Since therefore, true love is never idle, nor consists in words onely, but is active according to its power; 'tis evident, That which Christ commands us is that we *be alwaies ready, as much as in us lies, to do good to all men, but especially to those that are truely Brethren*, that is, good Christians.

The

The second Point.

2. *Wherein, every one has an advantage.*

AGain, consider, Since, as the Apostle sayes, *He that Loves his neighbour, has fulfill'd the Law*; 'tis evident this mutual Charity ought to be embrac'd, not onely, as a particular Virtue, but, as the common Mother and producer of all the rest. For, if *he that loves his Neighbour has fulfill'd the Law*, the whole Law, then, is nothing but of *Love* and doing good to our neighbour. Wherein admire the tender goodness of God, whose care and providence tends wholly to this, that it may be well with all and every one of us: See how, by that Law which commands thee to do good to all thou canst, by that very same Law, all and every other person is commanded to do thee what good they can. O! how holy is this Law of Christ, which so carefully provides for the wel-

welfare and advantage of all? but, withall, how profitable, how gainful to thee since, for that little good thou canst do to others, it obliges all others, readily, to do thee all the good they can; which must needs be infinitely more than what thou art able to do for them.

The

The third Point.

3. *The Touchstone of our Love to God.*

LAstly, Consider *the beloved Disciple S. John's words, He that loves not his Brother, whom he sees, how can he love God whom he sees not?* and observe that the love of thy Neighbour must be the Touchstone, whereon to try thy love to God, whether indeed, it be true or a counterfeit, and, as they say, but a Lip-love, having God in thy Mouth, but in thy heart the World. For, if thou lov'st not thy Neighbour, 'tis evident thou lov'st something else, that hinders thee from loving him; which (because it cannot be God) must needs be some created good, as Honour, Riches, Pleasure, &c. which thou lovest inordinately, that is, for it self, and not in order to God; and so, clearly, as long as thou lov'st not thy Neighbour, thou hast not God for thy

thy last end, nor lov'st him above all things, as is thy duty; for, as much as thou loveſt God, ſo much more, doubtleſs, thou loveſt thoſe things he loves; amongſt which, the chiefeſt (if not the onely thing, we know) is our Neighbour; whoſe love, even by Nature, is ſo recommended to us, that, without friendſhip and converſation with one another, our very lives would be tedious and miſerable.

Con-

Conclusion.

Therefore, improve its occasions.

CConclude, therefore, with a serious and effectual Resolution, in Truth and Actions, to love thy Neighbour; to contemn none, to refuse none in what thou art able to help them; but whatever good thou canst do to any person (without prejudicing thy self) even with a little prejudice to thy self, when tis much for his advantage) to do it chearfully and willingly: be glad when thou hast oblig'd any, esteeming that day lost wherein thou hast done good to none: And be certain this practice will be so far from injuring thee, that nothing will more advantage, nothing tender thee more grateful and acceptable both to God and Man.

FINIS.

Therefore, improve its occasions.

Conclude, therefore, with a serious and effectual Resolution, in Truth and Actions, to love thy Neighbour as thyself; to contain none, in any thing, to what thou wouldst have them, but whatever upon like cases thou wouldst do to any person (without unjustly prejudicing thy self) even more, such prejudice to thy self, which is much, for his advantage; especially and willingly when that hath a tendency to the doing good where it is most needful. And to be certain this practice will prevent from injuring others, will more advance your own interest, and procure more real and acceptable profit to thy self, than any